

#61

Lady Like

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Sonia

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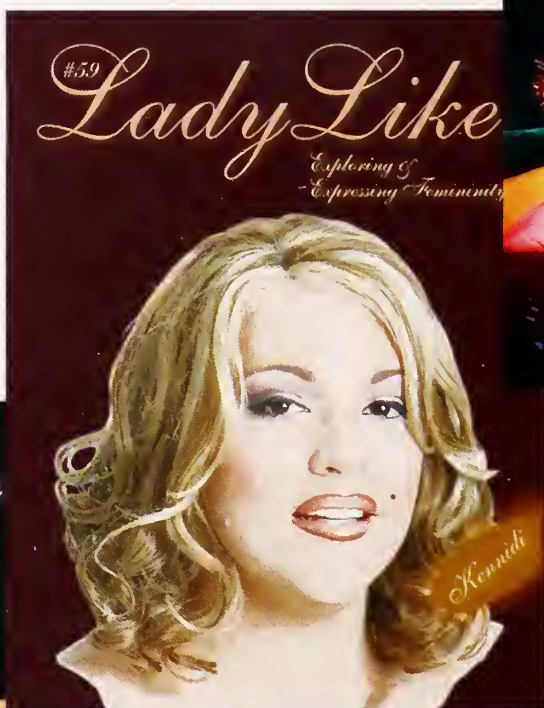
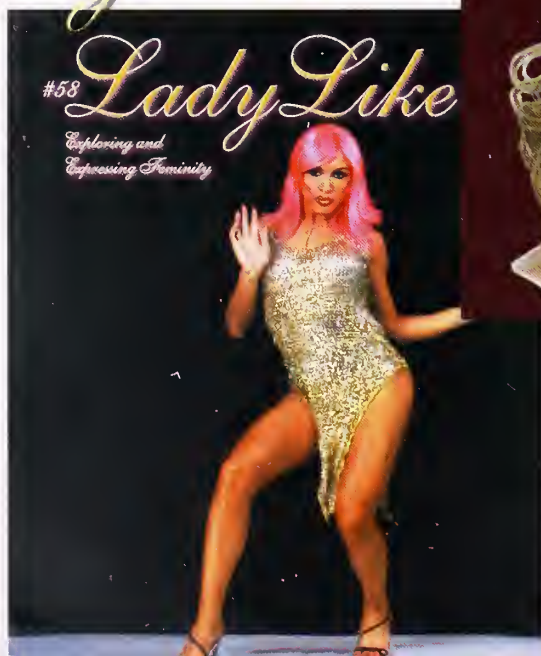
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LadyLike

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Sonia

Height:

5' 5"

Weight:

145

Age: 33

Residence: British Columbia, Canada

Profession: Computer software

Shoe Size: 7½

Dress Size: 9

Favorite Clothing: Casual sexy tops, black boots and ever-changing hairstyles.

Favorite Things: Music (listening, dancing, playing), Traveling

Turn Ons: Dressing up, dancing, people who want to enjoy life.

Turn Offs: Intolerance, lies and false friendship.

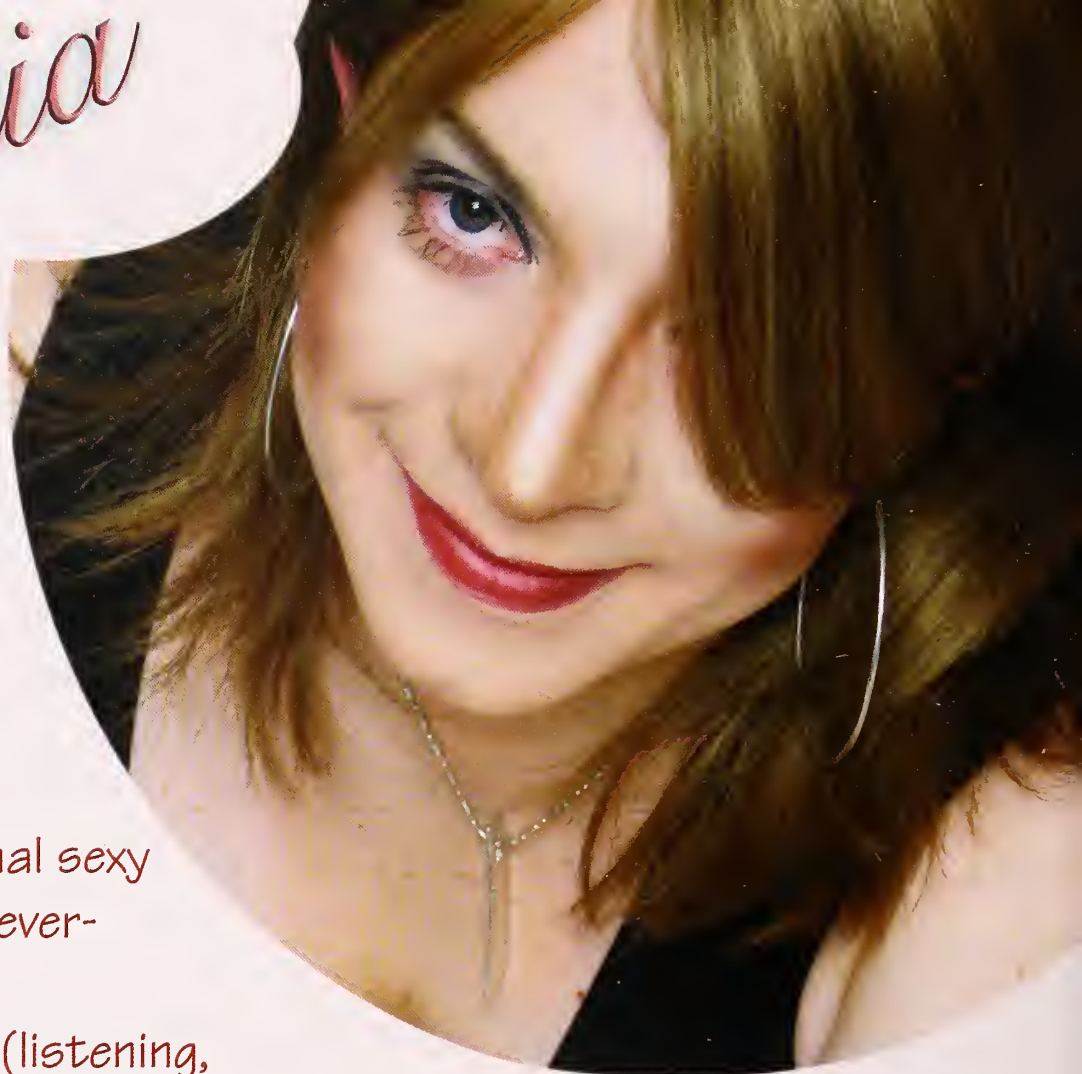
Perfume: Ralph Lauren Polo Sport

Makeup: Mac eyeshadows, and any kind of lipstick

Favorite Music: For thinking: Pink Floyd, U2. For partying: Soulful House

Favorite Movies: Star Wars, Fight Club, Y tu Mama Tambien

Favorite Places: The beach and a hike in the forest. In other words : Vancouver.



LL: Our LadyLike Profile this issue is Miss Sonia Vincent. Welcome to LadyLike, Sonia.

Sonia: Thank you so much for letting me be the Profile Girl!

LL: You're not an all American girl though, are you?

S: No, I'm Canadian.

LL: Not just Canadian...

S: Also Mexican.

LL: Readers, this girl is two nationalities in one! Which came first?

S: I was born in Mexico and lived there for the first 26 years of my life.

LL: So your first dress up experience was as a little señorita?

S: Sí. I'm not too sure how old I was, maybe three years. I remember being in my grandmothers house, looking in her drawers and closets. I found stockings, high heels and wigs. I remember trying them on. And the most important thing is that my grandmother never stopped me or said that it was wrong. I would not say either that she would encourage it, but she never stopped me. Then after that first time, I remember doing it more and more. Then for quite a few years nothing...

LL: When did you resume dressing up?

S: In about 4th or 5th grade. I was watching some

movie show on TV, and saw some images about Tootsie, about how Dustin Hoffman became a woman. As I was watching I became strangely and intensely interested. A man could actually look like a woman (Tootsie looked beautiful to me at the time anyway). But that was all I saw, because although my parents liked to go to movies, they weren't too interested in this one.

LL: So you had to wait to see Tootsie?

S: Not too long. A couple of months later the mother of one school friend took us to see the movie. I was excited that I was actually going to see it because of the transformation, but I could not tell my friends how excited I was. I even felt some arousal watching how he was transformed.

LL: That's a common experience. I used to get excited about any TG thing on television or in a movie. We are fascinated to see people doing what we want to do. Speaking of "doing what we want," when did you start your teen dressing years.

S: A couple of years later I started going to tape records at my grandparent's house. At some point they left me alone and one day I remembered what I had done when I was young. I went up sneaking around the closets and I found those heels and those wigs again. And I tried it, and it felt very good. So from that point on I would use any opportunity I had to dress. I would look at myself in the mirror and imagine I was a woman.

LL: It's great that you had your grandmother's stuff to wear.

S: But part of the problem was that her wig was too short, not too feminine. So, I started having fantasies

about getting a longer wig, so that the hair would look more feminine.

LL: Getting a great head of hair is one of the toughest things for the teenage crossdresser... unless your mother's in showbiz or something. What's a teenage CD to do?

S: Eventually I ended up looking around in my mom's closets, and guess what I found? Not exactly super long hair, but better (and modern) looking hair. So after that I started doing "it" at home, with my mom's clothes.

LL: We get so wrapped up in our dressing fun we sometimes forget where we're at. We forget that mom and dad might

come home. Did you ever get caught?

S: Once they came back earlier than I had expected and I had to run into the shower, which they found strange. The worst thing is that my mom found makeup traces on her clothing.

LL: What was her reaction?

S: We had a long talk. There were questions like, "Are you gay? What is it that you do? Why? Do you like women?" And my answers were, of course, "I'm not gay. I like women. I imagine myself as a woman."

LL: How did that go over?

S: My parents never really tried



to understand what was going on and I was threatened with being sent to see a psychologist, which for some reason, I really feared. So, I promised not to do it again.

LL: And of course you kept that solemn vow.

S: Of course... I kept doing it. A couple of years later I started working so one of my first checks was used to buy my own things.

LL: Did you go to stores and shop for your things?

S: I found a second hand ad paper and found that every week wigs would be sold and I got enough courage to buy some. I got a whole pack of 10 wigs for about the equivalent of \$50. They were longer and more feminine.

LL: Having your own hair is a big step. I'll bet you felt great.

S: Yes and I dressed every time I could, still with my mom's clothes, but now with my own hair.

LL: Boy are you a risk taker.

S: Oh, she probably caught me at least once more. Every time I did it, I felt guilty. Like I was doing something really wrong. Then I got a steady girlfriend.

LL: Ah ha! How did that affect your dressing activity?

S: The need to dress went down but never completely disappeared.

LL: You're married now. When did you meet your wife?

S: We started dating when I was about 22.

LL: Did she know about your dressing?

S: No. I wanted her to help me satisfy some of my "feminine" needs, so I asked her to wear slutty clothes, and even (at some point) a wig, to look different to me. But it didn't work, in part because of the fact that it didn't really cover all my needs, and that my girlfriend had a hard time doing it for me (no wonder) because I wanted things to be exactly like I had imagined. So it went on and off like that...

LL: That must have been a frustrating time for you. Did you have any experience at all meeting other TGs?

S: Not till around 1994. I read about something called Mosaic and the World Wide Web. Fortunately, at my university, they had both, so I went online. The second thing I searched for (after Pink Floyd) was "transvestite," and I found something. So I started reading and learned that I wasn't the only one; learned what a transsexual was.

LL: That's always a great moment, when you know that you're not the only person like this in the world.

S: Then, a year later, one of my uncles, Richard, comes back from Dallas, Texas, where another one of my mother's brothers, Edward, lived. Richard brings back a newspaper clipping and he says he needs to talk with us about Edward.

So the first thing I thought, is that he was gay (he had two children and was married). But nothing could have prepared me for what was coming: Edward had become Monica. A MtF transsexual. In my own family!

LL: Wow, how did you handle that?

S: I went into full denial. I stopped talking to him/her. I didn't want to know anything else. I was afraid, very afraid, that changing gender was definitely in my future.

LL: All this was going on and your girlfriend still knew nothing about your dressing, or about you going cold turkey. What happened next?

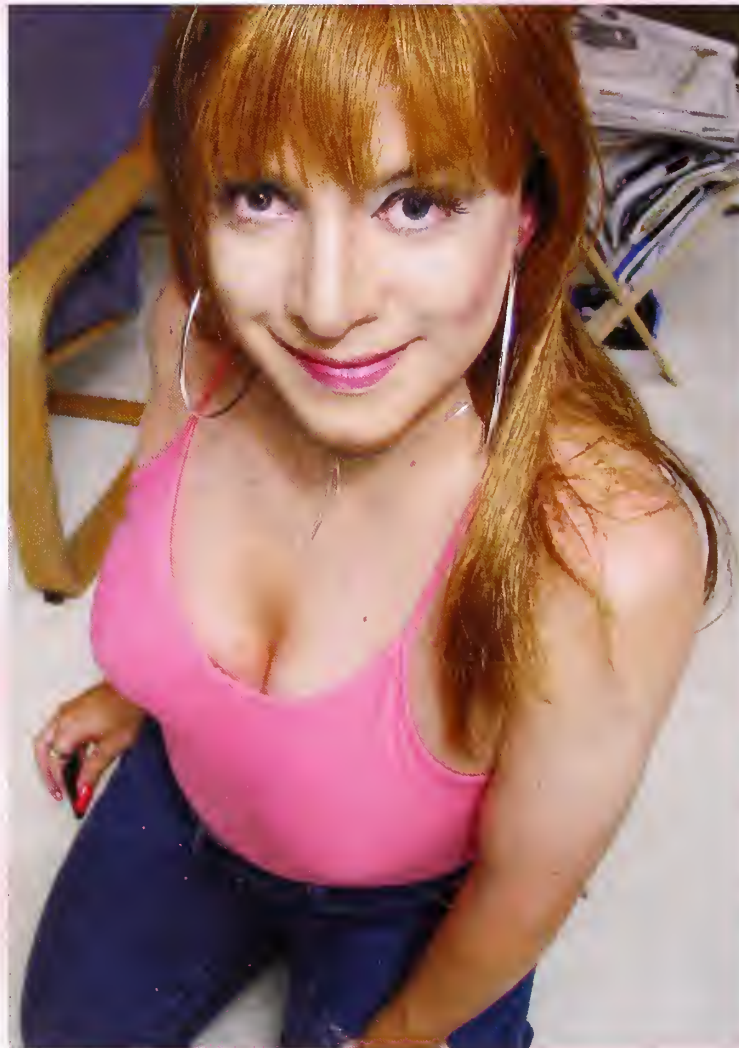
S: In 1996 we got married and some time later the need starts again. I had money now and I had the

wigs we had gotten for my wife so I got some clothes and started dressing again. And the Net didn't help. I kept visiting sites which showed me I wasn't alone and I saw all these beautiful girls, and thought, "I could be like them." At the same time, I still kept trying to "push" some of these needs onto my wife. It never worked.

LL: It usually doesn't. You were still in Mexico at this time. When did you go to Canada?

S: We moved to Canada in 1998.

LL: Sometimes a move will shake things up in a relationship. Did anything change after you got to The





Great White North?

S: The situation was basically the same. The need to dress would go away for a little bit, but never be completely gone. I managed to dress occasionally. I got some second hand clothes and a couple of wigs on eBay. Fast forward to June 2000. My wife is pregnant, visiting our family in Mexico. I'm alone in Vancouver.

LL: Uh oh, I feel that a big change is on the way. What happened?

S: I browsed the Net and found Tora Roberts' "Life's a Drag". She does makeovers. She is in Vancouver. I called her, completely freaked out and we set a date.

LL: That must have been intense.

S: I'd never told anyone what I really felt. Even my wife only had a sketchy idea of what was going on... could I tell a complete stranger?

LL: Well it helps that she knew all about CDs and she makes her living helping them look like girls. I bet it was a fun time.

S: What an unforgettable experience! She was very good. She calmed me down, and started to work. When she finished I looked better than I ever looked before.

LL: What did you do with those good looks?

S: I went back home and took pictures! Why do we need so many pictures?

LL: It's a phase. Longer for some of us than others. I think it's because we want to be able to experience being feminine and then look at ourselves (and show ourselves off to others) from the outside. But I digress. Let's get back to you. Now you've had a professional makeover and I bet there was no holding you back.

S: No, there was the guilt, again. I'd done something behind my wife's back. When she got back from

Mexico it took me four months to have the courage to tell her what I'd done.

LL: What did she say?

S: She was in denial, didn't even comment on it. After our beautiful daughter was born she went back to Mexico.

LL: And you...

S: Called Tora again. The last time was so hot that this time I wanted to go out after the makeover, go to a bar or a club. I got the makeover done and drove downtown.

LL: You had picked a place?

S: A gay bar. I circled the place over and over. Over and over. Finally, I managed to park, walk the short distance, and go into the bar.

LL: You were so worked up; how did you feel?

S: I sat inside and just watched people. I couldn't believe what I was feeling. I felt people looking at me but the makeover made me feel confident, so I relaxed. Even though I didn't talk to anyone it felt right. The next day Tora told me she was organizing a first night out for some local girls from a Yahoo group. They would be having dinner the next Friday, and she asked me if I wanted to come. After some thinking (because I was going to do the makeup myself) I decided to go.

LL: This is only your second time out of the house. Your adrenaline must have been on maximum.

S: Friday I got ready at home, and drove out. My heart was pumping and I was very nervous, and sweating. I found parking across the street—about 200 meters (Ed. Note: A little more than 200 yards) away. I had to walk ALL that distance, but I managed it.

LL: You must have been in a state. You had never actually met another crossdresser till this point and you were



going to have dinner with a bunch of them.

S: Right, it was the first time EVER that I met with other crossdressers. I'd only seen online pictures and a couple of drag shows, from the distance.

LL: What happened?

S: People started coming in and I relaxed. Soon I was having the time of my life. One of the attendees was a bisexual guy and he started talking to me. As we left the restaurant he grabbed my hand. I couldn't believe it, me—the straight guy—was actually enjoying it. Later we went dancing (which I love in any mode), and I finally got back home.

LL: I'm so jealous. Picked up by a bi guy on your first night, well, second night out. But what about your wife? Remember, the one who went to Mexico?

S: Well, I had just had one of the most life-changing days in my life and I kept thinking I want to do this the rest of my life. I made a decision. I had to talk with my wife. I couldn't just keep living a lie where being a crossdresser wasn't a part of me. It was and is.

LL: How did you make her listen to you? The last time you tried to tell her anything she refused to respond.

S: After she was back from Mexico I wrote her an eight page letter explaining my feelings and what I thought I wanted.

LL: Why did you do it in a letter?

S: I could never talk with her openly about

it. In the letter I basically told her I needed to do something, but I loved her and I didn't want to leave her or anything. I said I would completely forget about it, if that was the only way she could live with me, or we could keep trying the "you help me with my ultra-feminine needs" idea (which hadn't worked so far). Another choice I put in the letter was I would be able to dress up periodically with her knowledge, maybe even go out with some other girls. In any case, I promised I would seek professional help.

LL: Did you go for counseling?

S: I did, I had to talk with my family doctor to get a referral to a gender specialist. We had a few sessions, a couple with my wife. The specialist told me, "You're not really a transsexual, but you have the desire to feel like a woman occasionally. But you have to keep in mind it is just a fantasy. This woman you become is perfect in your eyes, so your wife cannot compete with her, keep that in mind." And he told my wife, that my crossdressing needs weren't going away any-time soon.

LL: What did your wife say?

S: She said we could give try. I could have one night a month when I could go out.

LL: Since you are still married and now you're a LadyLike Profile Girl I guess it's worked out?

S: That was three years ago. Now I can happily say that it was the best thing we could have ever done. I'm a much happier person now, we argue less, and although she's very adamant about not seeing me as a woman, or participating with me, she's understood that it is just part of me. Of course, this wasn't without some pains.

LL: Oh no. I bet you're going to tell me you had "off the deep end" syndrome.

S: Initially, I could not get enough of it. After 29 years of repression, I wanted to do it and do it and do it.

LL: You took the lid off. That's when things can get out of hand and marriages can go on the rocks.

LL: And, I still wasn't too sure about my real needs. Despite what the specialist had told me, wasn't I really a transsexual? Wasn't I gay or bisexual? I just had to find it out.

LL: And...

S: I'm not a transsexual. I would not want to be a woman the whole time, maybe just because I'm really happy





with my current life, my wife and my daughter, and it is not worth it (to me anyway) to potentially give it all up, for something that may not necessarily make me happier. At the same time when I am a woman, I definitely like male attention. But I think in reality that is mostly about me feeling like a woman, the validation part, instead of actual attraction.

LL: You're very perceptive to recognize that. As women we enjoy having a man flirt with



us, but, if you can't ever imagine getting up with him in the same bed everyday don't mistake a TG thrill for an attraction to sex and relationships with guys. So where are you now with your dressing needs?

S: I've learned a lot about myself. I got a little anxious at first, but things have settled now. I can talk with my wife openly, my femme clothes get washed with the rest, we've shared makeup a couple of times—and I have her. I can't complain at all.

LL: It sound like you have it all, a great family and the opportunity to go out en femme.

S: And when I go out, I have a LOT of fun!

Glamour Shots



For a t-girl, there are few things as exciting, and possibly terrifying, as going to your first transgender event. My first event was Paradise in the Poconos in September of 1997. I had been planning my trip there like the Allies planned the D-day assault. I had decided to go the whole nine yards. I set up a nail appointment (my first ever) at a local salon that I had heard was t-friendly. I also set up an appointment at a Glamour Shots location about 60 miles from my home for a makeover and photo shoot the day I was driving to the Poconos.

The point I'm trying to make here is that I had been dreaming of doing something like this for so long that it became a sort of t-girl experience explosion for me. I wanted to do everything at once. I thought this frenzy was unique to me. Over the years I have attended a dozen or so events and have discovered that nearly all attendees go through this on their first event.

People are always asking me my advice on things, so even though no one has ever actually asked me this question, I'm going to answer it anyway. What should you pack for a four day transgender event?

Each of us is at our own point in

the journey, both in terms of the development of our female self, and more to the point here, our wardrobe. Your first impulse will be to bring everything!. On my first venture I brought along eight suitcases. I'm not talking about little overnight bags, I mean big, honking suitcases! I had enough outfits to change every 15 minutes. By the end of the weekend I was exhausted.

Everyone has their own way of packing. My friend Melissa is my organization idol. She has lists for everything and begins packing for an event days, if not weeks in advance. I on the, other hand, have panic. I begin packing about 3 a.m. the night before I leave for the event. Now I don't expect you to make lists for everything, and I don't want you to panic. My goal here is to get you to someplace in between.

You are going to be dressing for four days in a row. You need to plan accordingly. Here then, are my thoughts on what a well packed t-girl should have.

Pantyhose or stockings, whatever is your pleasure, bring extras! Bring extra black ones (jet black, not "off" black), nude ones, white ones (If it's after Labor Day leave the white ones at home.) You will undoubtedly run a pair or two as you rush to make it to dinner or that special show.

You're going to be wearing a lot of different outfits over those four days. You need to have some flexibility in the foundation garments you bring. Think about bringing a form enhancing slip to wear under that special evening dress. Consider whether or not you will need a strapless bra to go with that new strapless or spaghetti strap gown.

Bring enough shoes. Be sure to include at least one comfortable pair. If you can stand to wear flats, bring them. Sneakers can be a wonderful break for your feet by

Friday or Saturday afternoon. I recommend a pair of black pumps, and a pair of strappy sandals for evening wear, at a bare minimum. Depending upon your predilections, you might want to bring a pair of lucite platforms, or a pair of leather thigh boots, too.

You will need two purses. One purse for your everyday wear and one to go with your evening outfits. If you can't afford two, then take the need to carry it as an evening bag into consideration when picking the one you will bring.

On the practical side you should of course bring all of your toiletries. Be sure to bring along that special facial moisturizer that you went out and bought after reading my skin care column. Don't forget your toothbrush, mouthwash, deodorant, razor with extra blades, and some aspirin for that morning after hangover. Don't forget your makeup!

You should plan on changing your clothes at least two or three times a day. I know a certain writer, who writes a glamour column for a certain TG magazine that used to change her clothes at least six times a day. Hmmmm, I wonder who that could be? I digress. You'll need something for day and another outfit for the evening's festivities. For day, consider a simple skirt and blouse, a nice suit, or if you don't feel the need to show your legs, a pair of jeans or nice pants. Thursday evening is usually a more casual event, so dress nicely but you may not need to go too glam.

Friday, and Saturday evenings are almost always devoted to glamour attire. You should plan on bringing two nice dresses or evening outfits, anything from a simple little black dress, to a sequin and rhinestone encrusted gown for each of these. These dresses *can* be expensive. If you are on a budget try your local thrift

store or department stores like JC Penney when they are having their end of season clearances. It never hurts to plan ahead for next year's fall events by purchasing a gown on sale in late January or early February. The same thought process applies for summer events by shopping in late July or August.

Jewelry is easy. For daytime bring whatever casual style you normally wear. For evening, rhinestones are the way to go. If not rhinestones, then something appropriately dressy for the beautiful dresses and outfits you'll be wearing. Also, if you can, bring a watch. It will help you stay on schedule for all of your events. You can spend hundreds on a beautiful woman's watch at a jeweler or department store, or you can spend \$10 at Wal-Mart for a nice little number that will do the job just fine.

Hair is another wide open category. If you are lucky enough to have your own long luxurious locks, you have no decisions to make here, and are the envy of us all. If on the other hand, you are, as I am, "follicly challenged" then you are going to need a wig or wigs. If you have more than one wig, then by all means feel free to bring the whole collection. I usual-

ly travel with six or eight of them, changing all the time, and confusing the hell out of everyone. Whatever you bring, please, take the time to style it. One of the most feminizing aspects of your presentation is beautifully styled hair. If you know how, do it yourself. If you don't there are almost always one or two vendors there that would love to style it for you. If you are styling your own, then don't forget your wig spray, combs and brushes. If someone else is doing it, they will have all the necessary products.

Those are my thoughts. Regardless of what you bring along, or what you have to wear, the most important item is you. You are there to have fun, learn, and meet some wonderful new friends. Take advantage of as many social opportunities as you can. Go to the dinners, go on a field trip. Attend a



A t-girl's hotel room by the second night of an event.



Amanda has plenty of room for all of her gowns and wigs in the new Glamour Express!

class or seminar on a topic that interests you. Stroll through the vendor area and chat with the vendors. They are there to help you and most are more than willing to share ideas with you.

Thanks for reading, and I'll see you at the next event!

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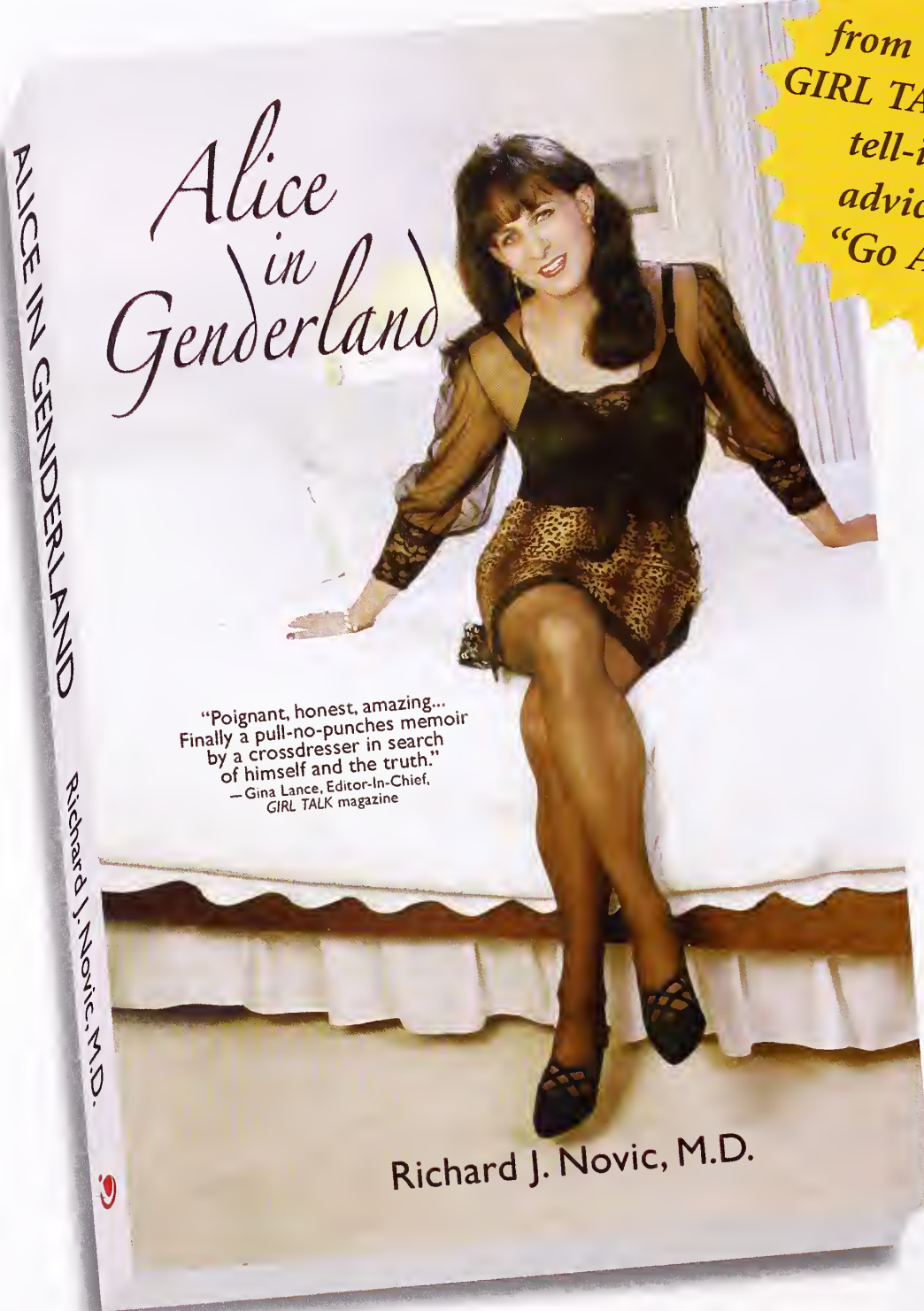


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Reality Check



Welcome to issue #61. I can't believe we're that old. Soon we'll be using walkers and wearing blue/gray wigs. Don't worry though, we'll still be

the sexiest mag for TG seniors. Even if we don't have it—we're going to flaunt it.

But, as we age we do worry about things; how to keep our girlish good looks, what to do about these developing wrinkles, and where can I get sexy orthopedic pumps? One thing that has been bothering me is facing the rest of my life without a partner. Early on, I, like the majority of us, lived with my parents. Then I had roommates. Then I had a girlfriend who became a wife. After we divorced was when the exploration of my CD desires kicked into high gear. Even during that period I had some girlfriends and wasn't alone. As I've aged more it has gotten harder to meet a woman who would be a good companion for the rest of life's journey. This isn't just a TG thing, many older people have trouble meeting a partner, hence the popularity of dating services.

Some may say, "Angela, why don't you try to find a nice man and settle down?" Well, while I could be happy dating guys, dining and dancing in my feminine finery, I can't see waking up in the morning and cooking him breakfast. At least not till I've shaved and reapplied my makeup. So an LTR (that's Netspeak for "long term rela-

tionship") with a woman is the only answer. My core belief about relationships is that nothing that's not based on honesty can ever last. To that end I decided to give the "Man Seeking Woman" page on the free Internet site Craig's List a try. And be totally honest about who I am and what I'm looking for. Here (edited slightly—nobody needs to know my exact age) is the ad I posted:

"To the point: I'm a ** year old body and a 20-30 something brain. I'm not in bad shape aside from a bit of gut. BIG THING: If dating a man who crossdresses doesn't work for you stop reading now and hit your back button. Aside from the crossdressing, which I have explored for the past 20 some years, and had an interest in since the age of 5, I am into music of all types, mystery stories (Charlotte MacLeod just died—if you have read her that's a good thing) science fiction (but I don't go to Cons and wear Star Trek outfits), writing (mostly about TG issues, I edit a magazine for crossdressers but I'm branching out and have been published in mainstream papers), I act when I get film or video work, I'm a member of the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA, I do announcing work and am currently trying to drum up more of that. I'm 5'11". I don't follow pro sports at all.

"But enough about me. You should be between 35 and 50. 5'6" to 5'11" are lovely heights. I like women who are slim but not anorexic. Since I crossdress it's important to me that you like to play with fashion. (If you're an 11/12-14 you could share my femme wardrobe.) You should be equally comfortable in a designer dress or jeans and a T shirt. Dressed up or dressed down you should have

style. You should like to enhance your beauty with cosmetics but not be a woman who can't leave the house unless she's gone through her makeup application routine.

"If this sounds like you and you think it would be intriguing to meet a man who's in touch with his feminine side but hasn't (and won't) give up his maleness then let's meet, have some fun and see what happens. Advantage of dating a crossdresser? I would LOVE to shop with you. If you can include a photo I will send you mine."

This is not my first try with Craig's List. The first time I posted there it was in the "Strictly Platonic" section. I got three email responses to that ad, which was just looking for gal pals to hang out with. Out of the three I never heard from two of them again and one lady met me for drinks, promised we'd get together again, and then went and got pregnant. That's put a stop to sipping cocktails with her. (But she did say she'd get together sometime to shop.)

The two ladies who disappeared both praised me for being brave. I guess they admired the fact that I'd put myself out there for possible ridicule (none of which appeared after either ad) but didn't have the moxie to actually hang out with me.

The "Man Seeking Woman" ad has gotten no response. It has been on Craig's List for over a month and not one lady has made it past the crossdressing revelation (or no one is my size). I keep up hope but I'm betting the honest approach was too intimidating. If you put yourself in the woman's place (and let's face it, that's what we love to do) you can see that while you may be open minded and can perhaps accept that a man may want to dress in lady's clothing, and maybe he can even look acceptable, you don't really know anything about crossdressers or crossdressing 'cause

they're not a part of your regular life. You're not going to take a chance on someone who may be very strange (visions of Jerry Springer panelists and crossdressed movie killers flash through your mind) so you don't hit that email link. In the platonic ad I expressed no interest in S.E.X. so it wasn't as threatening as approaching someone who may be strange, who wants to be with you "that way". I think that made it easier for those who responded but even they didn't want to get too close. I can understand that since I have read many ads from women looking for men on Craig's List and I have yet to hit the email link and engage in Internet correspondence with any of them. If there are things in their ads that put me off it's not hard to see why the word "crossdresser" might be an instant interest killer. But, despite it all I will persevere in my attempt to get a shopping buddy to sleep with. What I won't do is sugar coat it and I won't make the big mistake of trying to keep it a secret. If you start seeing someone and she's interested in you and you're interested in her, in that LTR sense, then when do you tell her? Tell her too soon and she's scared away. Tell her after you've been together for awhile and she thinks you have kept a secret from her. It's a dilemma that, at this point, I will avoid by being up front about who

I am. Maybe the integrity alone will attract someone. That would make her a very special lady indeed.

But now back to fun! I am hosting a TG party night in Philadelphia every second Saturday of the month at a great restaurant called L2. The opening night is April 9th, which isn't that far away and the May party (on May 14th) will be LadyLike Night. Astra and JoAnn will be there, so if you're in Philly come on down. For more info on it visit my web-site: <http://www.tgat12.tv>. (That's a .tv suffix! Not a stodgy old .com.)

If you are a modern girl and hooked up with the email let us know what you think about LL. Send a note to [angela@cdspub.com] and tell us what you like, don't like and what you'd like to see in the pages of LL. I may not be able to answer every email (I'll be busy checking the online dating sites) but I want to know what the readers think, and you might show up in the Letters section.



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Reality Makeovers

Rita

It's so hard not to be totally mean about this photo. I'll try to keep it only semi-mean. It's a toss up as to whether you first notice her "hair" or the strange way she's holding her hands. The hands have to be held that way so she can show off either her nails, which are really too small to see, or her rings: also too small to actually see. The effect of the hair and hands taken together gives the shot a canine quality. At least the color of the wig(s) compliments the Christmas theme by counter pointing the green of the tree. But, the height of the hair and the lowness of the ceiling make us worry that she will get it caught on the pipes or the hanging lights and lose the whole thing. If Rita is going for an over-the-top drag queen look—she's achieved it. But her expression leans more toward deer-in-the-headlights than a sassy drag queen showing off for the camera. So, lose at least half of the hair. Pose more naturally. Try to look sexy, not stunned, and for goodness sake—smile.

*Let Angela be nice. I don't feel the need to mince words.
Hey, I hear you sniggering out there. At least she was brave enough to send us a picture. Where's yours? Astra*



Barbara

Now we know that Barbara can take a better photo than this. She really must have gone out of her way to send us something bad to critique. Let's start with the pose. Not sexy. Always point the toes. Turn the body so the viewer sees less of it, heightening the illusion of female slimness,. Her left foot is not adding sex appeal to the shot. It's acting like a black line across the bottom, and, nobody wants to see the bottom of your shoe. Both legs are just plain wrong. The left is not bent at all and the right is bent too much to cross at the calf. The hands are not helping. Again, it's obvious that she wants us to see her nails, which are visible and very pretty, but the left hand down on the knee would have added something. In the position it's in it just points down toward that bad foot. This pose takes a lady we know is very attractive and presents her in the worst way. The white background blends into her hair and the black nightie does nothing to flatter her figure. Finally, her body is too far away from the camera. The foot of the bed is washed out by the flash, as are her legs, but her upper body is too far away to be well lit. Her face is reduced to hard eyes, nose and lipstick so we can't really see the real her. Lesson: Pose to emphasize the femme, frame the photo so you are the main thing in the shot and be careful of your lighting—too much and you get whited out, too little and you are too dark for us to print.

I'm just depressed. I can usually count on you for a really hot pic or 2. You know, I find the lack of stockings (and garters) extremely distressing. Hmm...perhaps I have a fetish?





Dina's Diner

Welcome our newest columnist Dina Amberle. Miss Amberle wrote Vis A Vis for the now defunct Transgender Community News. Her powers of observation and commentary wit make her a welcome addition to LadyLike.

HO HUM

Did anyone out there watch TBS' "He's a Lady" reality series? I tried to watch it but found that it was not interesting... because I already crossdress. Did you feel the same? I thought the producers tried to walk that fine line between titillating the audience with a little crossdressing while not offending anyone who might not want to see men really get into dressing and acting like (or becoming) women. We who already crossdress, I think, found it mostly unsatisfying.



Albert/Alberta on TBS' "He's a Lady"

And the contestants, who were billed as "macho men" who were fooled into the crossdressing premise, seemed very careful about maintaining a distance between

the women's clothing and their own psyches. But as I said, I didn't watch much of the series, so maybe my impression was wrong. Oh, but one impression I had that is rock solid was that Albert/Alberta was the cutest of the bunch and didn't even have to try that hard to look fetching.

I saw recently on the TBS website that David, the heaviest contestant, won the top prize. This is nice for all the BBWCD's out there but I have to wonder if the rest of the country got into it at all. It was interesting to see how little buzz there was about the show. Nobody was talking about it at the office or on radio shows. Meanwhile, other equally horrible reality shows were getting the full media treatment. I began wondering if it was the last gasp for televised crossdressing. If it is, good riddance.

What we really need is a TV show about real-life Japanese Princess fetishists. You think I kid?

Read the first item...

LOOK LIKE A PRINCESS

Does the idea of dressing in elegant gowns and baubles and dancing the night away in a Viennese ballroom appeal to you? Well, you're not alone, honey. It also appeals to a whole new subculture of Japanese women (yes, real women) who have become clients of a travel agency that arranges "Princess vacations." I saw an article about this from the *Washington Post* dated January 12, 2005.

Pop sociologists, your faithful correspondent included, have noticed that Japanese pop culture embraces a wide variety of somewhat kooky hobbies. The *Post* reported, for example, that in two of Tokyo's trendy neighborhoods "teenagers and women in their thirties and forties have embraced what they call the Lolita fashion. Dressing up as little dolls in frilly dresses and lacy baby caps, hundreds of such girls and women parade along the



So, like, can I return my Prince Charming if he doesn't meet my standards?

sidewalks of Tokyo clutching Teddy bears and wearing enormous ribbons in their hair."

But that is a whole different scene (and one I'll have to return to for a future item) than the Cinderella fantasy reported in full by the Post's Anthony Faiola. This is an expensive scene for Japanese women with time and money to burn on their princess dreams. The trips can cost between \$4,000 and \$10,000 for a trip to Vienna, training on correct noble deportment, fashion advice to choose just the right gown and accessories, and a male escort to waltz the night away in a swanky ballroom. "How I danced the night away!" said one exuberant Japanese Cinderella. "I left my real world behind and entered a dream world. I can't wait to do it again."

Doesn't that sound like the reaction usually reserved for our own favorite "escape"? There must be something about dressing like a Princess that (no matter the gender) elicits the same response.

The Princess vacation trend is led by Makiko Horio (aka Makiko Krone, because it sounds "more European") who quit her banking job in 2000 after she went on her own transformational vacation to Vienna where she escaped into her fantasy. Now she runs an agency aimed at a limited clientele willing to pay big yen for a trip as a Princess. (A Google search for her name will reveal a few sites with information). She was wearing a red ball gown and glittering necklace when the Post reporter interviewed her at 10:30 a.m. It's good to be the Queen!

While sociologists try to chalk up the Princess fantasy as a response to Japan's economic recession, and the Japanese males' detachment from their wives, Makiko is more realistic. She noted that American girls get the chance to be Princess for a night at Proms

and the like. "But in a white kimono, you just don't feel like a Princess. I think all women share the Princess fantasy." Pssst, Makiko... and not just the women.

IF YOU BUY THE PREMISE— YOU BUY THE BIT

That was one of those catch phrases that the late Johnny Carson used to say when one of the Tonight Show's comedy segments required a stretch of the imagination on the part of the viewer in order for the joke to make any sense at all. I read a real news item on *Fark.com* that made me think of Carson's catch phrase. The original article appeared on the Fark website in December, 2004 (the actual story unfolded months beforehand) and I found follow-up stories on the *Cincinnati Enquirer's* website. Here's how this un-funny stunt unfolded:

Four teenage boys reported that they had been fooled into having sex with a man posing as a woman. But wait (all you crossdressers out there), no crossdressing was involved in the charade. Apparently, the man told the boys that a willing woman would engage in sex acts with the boys as long as they wore blindfolds and did not try to fondle the woman because she was shy... or something like that.

After their encounters with the "mystery woman", the boys compared notes and wondered if they were in fact having sex with their adult male go-between, Stephen Hill, 45, a reporter for a local Cincinnati television station. One of the boys did make hand contact with the "female" during the act and felt something not usually found on a woman. And one of the boys noticed what he believed to be a hidden video camera in the room where the action was taking place. The rest, as they say, is tabloid history.

The boys confronted Hill by phone with their suspicions that Mr. Hill himself was their "mystery woman" and Hill offered them \$2,000 to buy their silence, according to prosecutors. The check was produced for the police and a subsequent search warrant found incriminating evidence in Hill's home. Hill also made an unsuccessful suicide attempt and tried to destroy the videos in a homemade toxic solution. (As a man's life goes down the drain—you are there!) True to form, Hill's attorney tried to have the search thrown out on technical grounds.

Mr. Hill eventually admitted that he had duped the boys into having sex with him under the falsest of false pretenses. He was fired from his job with WCPO in Cincinnati and hearings began in December after his arrest.

Hill's defense attorneys argued that he had been hiding his true gay sexuality and had grown up in a dysfunctional setting and pleaded for leniency. A forensic psychiatrist hired by his defense said that he poses no threat as a re-offender. Cue the music... you be the judge. Now, where is that damn blindfold?

BOB, ARE YOU SHAPING YOUR EYEBROWS?

There's a question you won't be hearing at the Elks Hall. At least not until the supposed latest trend in male grooming works its way through society. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* printed an article about a possible new direction in male grooming in its "Out There" column by Jeff Weinstein on January 12. It was headlined "Raising an Eyebrow at Male Trend."

According to the article, some men are beginning to get their brows shaped professionally. Once the practice of only professional drag queens, "a certain type of dating-age, club-happy, beer-and-nachos manly man is now

having butch brows arched and narrowed to a delicate turn."

This new approach is much more radical than merely separating a "uni-brow" or trimming errant sprouts. According to Weinstein, "these buffed adventurers are going all the way to Maybelline City, and what would have been called delicate feminine eyebrows are sitting quite contentedly on what would have been called masculine faces. It's cool to fit in and girlfriends, we are told, will demonstrate their appreciation."

Seeing a man with shaped eyebrows is one of those things that is unsettling when noticeable. Oddly enough, when I saw Donnell, the African-American contestant on "He's a Lady", I thought his eyebrows looked a little too pretty and wondered if he might have been a real drag queen thrown in as a ringer. On those few occasions when I've noticed what appears to be a plucked eyebrow on a man, I naturally wondered if he was "one of us." But it's not much of a conversation starter (at least in my neighborhood) to ask another man if he does drag because "you have beautiful eyebrows."

Every so often, the cosmetic industry or trend-watchers will try to get men interested in radical new grooming regimens. Almost all go down in flames. It will be interesting to see if the shaped eyebrows thing really catches on.

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE BURGLED PANTIES

The *FoxNews.com* website reported a story under the headline "Accused Panty Raider Pinched in New Mexico" on January 17, 2005. The sub-headline read: "There's something about northwestern New Mexico when it comes to underwear thieves."

Apparently, the first case of stolen ladies' undies was cracked last January when a trail of panties led police to the home of a 13 year old boy in Kirkland, New Mexico. I think the less said about this case, the better. Let's move on.

The most recent case was actually a serial panty-stealer who was terrorizing underwear drawers in the Land of Enchantment for five months before his apprehension. On January 8, 2005, a Farmington, New Mexico woman and her 15 year old son came home to find a strange man (perhaps

the pun is intended) in the mother's bedroom. The woman's son gave chase to the fleeing intruder. Although the boy lost his quarry, police later arrested a 34 year old man, who was identified as the would-be panty burglar.

Police later searched the man's apartment and found 217 pairs of women's underwear, 24 bras, two pairs of shorts, a skirt and an evening gown. (Hell, that could be any of us). Police now believe they have the perpetrator of 28 separate cases of reported panty thefts in the Farmington, New Mexico area.

Detective Sergeant Steve Burch told a local paper, "This isn't something like tools or articles of value. This is something that someone is putting in their closet or something like that." I think as admirers of women's panties, we can all agree with the sergeant's conclusion it was probably more a case of "something like that" than "putting in the closet." We might take exception to the statement that panties are not something of value... but you can understand what he means.

Meanwhile, police are waiting for the evidence to tie their perp to the other cases of purloined panties. They believe there were probably many more cases not reported by the victims because of the embarrassment, and trying to stop thinking about what the thief might have been doing with the stolen goods. Ewwwww!

In other news, eBay just took down my "used panties auction."



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Beauty & The Beach 2004

OHMIGAWD! We had such a great time in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, last November. If you weren't there you just cannot appreciate how much fun we had from looking at these photos. I know, I know. I'm prejudiced. So, go ask anyone who was there if they had fun. Go ahead! I dare ya.

Well, you have a chance to rectify that error in judgement if you weren't there last year and you'll have a chance to have even more fun this year if you were there. The next Beauty And The Beach event is scheduled for November 2-6, 2005, same location. Register early because this one will fill up quickly. See the ad elsewhere in this issue or visit the CDS website to register online.

The Costume Party was a blast! The theme was Fairy Tale and Nursery Rhyme characters.

*We had a lot of
Little Red
Riding Hoods,
and a
Princess...*



More Costume Party

Beauty And The Beach



Nov. 3 – 7, 2004



*...and a Fairy
Godmother, and a
Little Bo Peep
and
Snow White!*

The theme this year is Cartoon
and Japanese Anime characters.

Beauty & The Beach 2004



Above left: We partied in the bar every night.

Above right: Mary Alice sang "I Am What I Am" in her own voice for the Pholliciez.

Center: We even had a wedding! Candy, a minister in real life, officiated.

Below left: Michelle Moore did one of her famous skits - Jane Austin Powers - for the show.

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Nov. 2 - 6, 2005

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Luann, Fla. FWD#3985



Letters

Dear JoAnn,

Thanks so much for putting my letter, "One TG's Effort to Understand" in your wonderful LadyLike #59. Because of you I became aware that I was not alone. You gave me names of support groups that have since helped me. I have met two other CDs in Seaford, one of which I've known for years and didn't know we were alike. I am determined to "come out" this year. My sister that I have met has promised to take pictures. I'll send you one when I get it.

Thank you and LadyLike for all you have done for me. I love you and LadyLike so much.

Your sister,

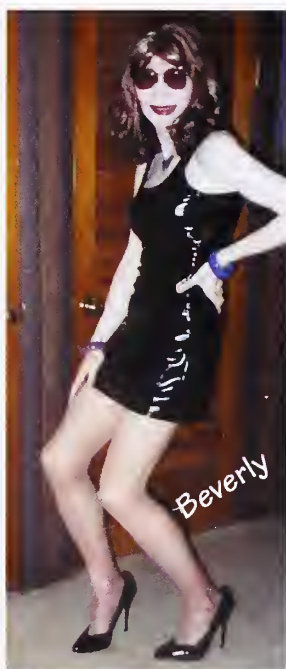
Ginny, C.H. Rollins,
7501 Rivershore Dr.,
Seaford, DE 19973.

Dear Angela,

Thank you so much for including a photo of mine in the Lingerie Mirror-Mirror in LL #59. Wow, it's an amazing issue. I read the Reader's Letters with great interest including Renee Miller's account of the near disastrous accident with a deer. Just one more reason why it can be a scary world at times.

I read Candy's article with particular interest. After seeing the Profile on her in issue #57 I wrote to her. I feel very fortunate to have been able to correspond with her since.

I'm renewing my subscription plus



Beverly

a contribution to the TG Fund. I hope all is well with everyone there. Thanks you again for such a great magazine.

Love,
Beverly

Hi JoAnn and Angela,

I was sitting by the pool and I said to myself, why doesn't LadyLike have a swimsuit issue in Mirror-Mirror? I'm a Florida girl and water is a big part of Florida living! But Maybe other girls



Alison

in the summertime go out swimming. This photo was taken in November 2004! It was at a resort and it was a perfect day for the pool. Well, it was just an idea to think about.

All my love,
Alison Van Horn,
P.M.B. 35015
Paradise Plaza,
Sarasota, FL 34239-6905

How about it girls? Will you answer Alison's challenge and get those swimsuit shots taken? If we get 'em, we'll print 'em.

Dear LadyLike,

I was so impressed with your magazine that I subscribed to it. Your features are not only helpful but fun to read. The photos and tips on how to improve them are great. I have enclosed several photos along with my address and email in a desire to have them published.

I enjoy watching all kinds of movies from the most current to the

old black and white; enjoy jazz and blues. I like to cuddle up on a couch on a cold winter's day feeling the warmth of a fireplace; walking in the park listening to the crunch of



Diane

leaves under my heels; candlelight dinners and those long lasting wet kisses. I enjoy writing or gossip through letters or email, or meeting people who can respect my wishes, as I would for them.

Hugs and kisses,
Diane, T.R.,
P.O. Box 252,
Savage, MN 55378,
jmmagummariley@aol.com

Thanks for your subscription, Diane. We're glad you love the magazine and glad that you sent in your photos. But, we have to say, your photos aren't that good, as you can see from this one. The focus is off and we had to crop out most of your butt. (Please girls, try to keep your photos ladylike!) Don't be discouraged, though! We REALLY want everyone to take great photos of themselves and send them to us so everyone looks the best they can. We've used the photo here as an example of the kind of thing we're hoping to correct with our LadyLike Reality Makeover feature. We have a couple of photos for that feature this issue and you can see them and our scathing critiques on page 17. One of your other photos had a really lovely pose but it was over exposed in a streak across the middle and under exposed at the top and the bottom. It takes a lot of planning and work to get a great shot but the results will make you and our readers very happy. Keep taking those photos Diane, follow our tip and

they'll get better every time.

Dear LadyLike,

Thank you so much for publishing such a great magazine and thank you for including my photos and letters. You are so very kind in doing so. LL must get distributed around the world because I get letters from all over. Again, LL readers are the nicest people, always so kind in their remarks toward Amy Joy. I will continue to subscribe to LL for as long as I am here on Earth and longer if you can find a way to get it to here in after.

I am enclosing a few new photos for you to print and yes, you can pick any one of them for the critiquing panel. (Reality Makeover) I may be sticking myself way out there but if it will help others learn more (myself included) go for it and critique my photos.

I just love the chance of being a LadyLike, special lady. That didn't come out right! Thank you for includ-



ing Amy Joy in LadyLike. Thank you everyone for making my life a lot more comfortable in who I am.

With Love to All,
Amy Joy
PO Box 530994
Livonia, MI 48153

We've run the best of the photos you sent with your letter. Even it has some problems. One big tip, stay away from white clothes for flash photography—especially white clothes against a light background. The flash from a regular camera washes out the white top and you blend into the background. Natural light is best if you can arrange it. But shooting in sunlight can cause other problems. (Like squinting.) The other fault with this shot is the softness of the focus. While a bit of softening is sometimes a help with things like bad complexions and wrinkles (Sybil Shepherd in any episode of Moonlighting!) when it gets too fuzzy it looks more blurry than soft. And we simply must have actual photographic prints, the kind made by using developed film and paper in a dark room. I suspect that you have broken our primary law and have been sending computer prints. If you're doing that we'd much rather



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have the original image file they were printed from. After they have been printed on a photo printer and then scanned and printed in the magazine the fuzziness gets way out of hand. Instead of a lovely lady all we see is an amorphous blob. We'll put the really problem photo you sent into Reality Makeover next issue. Don't get too anxious, we'll be nice. Yeah, sure.

Dear Ladylike,

I bought my October issue at the local newsstand. When I got home, I ripped to the Mirror-Mirror section to see if I got in. I dejectedly saw that I didn't make it in this time. Three months is quite a build up, you know. I realize that everyone doesn't make it in every time. One thing I'm curious about is do you keep all the photos sent in on file or should we send in new photos as

put my P.O. box address with it.

Not to sound like I'm asking too much but if you were to run this letter in the Letter section also, I've enclosed another photo. Sorry I'm asking for a lot but a girl's gotta speak up. My self-esteem needs a fix.

I want to wish you the best of luck with your great magazine. My corresponding with so many Mirror-Mirror girls over the last several years has really been a neat experience. Thank you for making this opportunity possible for me.

Respectfully,
Cris Fox
P.O. Box 14271
Louisville, Ky. 40214

Sorry you didn't make it into October and it looks like you didn't grace our pages in the last issue either. The pictures keep on coming in and JoAnn has a complex filing system involving a special code and alternating cycles of the moon. Or she throws them all in a shoe box under her desk. Anyhow, when we start work on every issue any photos that haven't been used are carefully taken from the shoe box and placed in an envelope that I take to my office. Those envelope photos are the ones I go through to choose what goes in the next issue. If I have six pictures of one person that have come in over several months I choose the best one or two. The others are slid into another envelope carefully labeled "pictures we didn't use yet". Your chances of getting included more often are better if every shot you send is a different pose in a different outfit. If you always pose in front of your closet, try posing in front of the drapes, or setting on your couch instead. And the old axiom about the squeaky wheel getting the oil holds true: this issue you're not only here in the letters but you show up in the Mirror-Mirror section with the photo you picked. Keep those pictures coming and remember, keep smiling.

Dear JoAnn:

I must confess that I have an absolutely rotten habit of waiting weeks and weeks before opening my newest LadyLike magazine. I relish the contents so much that I sit and savor the day that I'll open it.

But this time I broke the habit. LL #59 is terrific! And I was going to write and tell you all about "He's a Lady", but as always you're on top of all the "in" news and beat me to it with some marvelous information and pics. As I write this next week should be the final episode and I can hardly wait. The show turned out much better than I expected, and I sincerely hope that many of the issues and questions raised will make people think in a more positive way about transgendered people. One question they should ask the finalists is, "Now you as 'ladies' have a deeper real understanding about how your wives/girlfriends live and what they go through. Now what do you think about transvestites and transsexuals as fellow persons?"

Since I'm a longtime subscriber, I've included a few older photos of Ruthie dating back to 1998. I simply haven't the time to turn my living room into a photography studio yet. And I'm waiting for the springtime



soon as possible for the next issue?

I've enclosed one of my favorite photos to hopefully make the January issue. If I am selected for the January Mirror-Mirror, I would love for you to use this photo. Feel free to



to shoot a photo or two of Ruthie with her favorite machine, a Harley-Davidson Sportster. Maybe you could ask Astra what kind of make-up treatments would be most effective in the outdoors for that shoot?

Yes, this seems to be the year of the crossdresser, which has had more positive vibes from people than I've felt in a long time. Speaking of which, I hope that the winner of the "He's a Lady" contest makes one final request: that, at the victory celebration party, all the judges and the host of the show have to go to the party crossdressed to the max! Hell, I've been doin' it for so many years, and never got a dime...

Sincerely, with a hug,
Ruthie

We just knew that the one who was the most "LadyLike" would win on He's A Lady. Glamour is one thing but true feminine responses to the various situations were what paid off. Now turn off the TV and

get that photo studio set up! If you're planning on a photo shoot on a Harley, we suggest dark, dark eyeliner, dark red lips, and blend in a lot of blush so we can get the idea that you just pulled in off a 50 mile ride that left them pink from wind burn.

(Excuse me, but that's really Angela's suggestion. Mine has more to do with corsets, seamed stockings and and 4" pumps... wait, that wouldn't be correct with a Harley, so make it thigh high boots- Astra.)

Dear JoAnn and Angela,

I have been a subscriber to LadyLike for about a year and a half and I want to compliment you on the quality of your magazine. I read it from cover to cover and really enjoy the letters, Mirror-Mirror, and the articles. The articles have been very interesting and helpful.

Now a little about me and then I have a request of your readers. I am a -- year-old (sic) transgendered person and have been crossdressing

since the 1950s (longer than most of your readers have been alive).

Even now I am still a neophyte. I have been out publicly fully dressed as a woman on two occasions, once in Seattle (after a makeover) and once in Denver (self made-up). I thoroughly enjoyed those two outings.

But I am still pretty much a closet dresser because of the small community in which I live. I bought a house in the country four months ago and dress daily around the house. My wife and I separated in September of 2003, after she discovered my stash of clothes the year before. She is unbending in her opposition to my crossdressing but I feel I must be who I am, a transgendered person. We have not been able to reconcile. We still see each other frequently, go to church together, out to dinner, and visit each other often.

It is my belief that all of us are not totally male or female. We each



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have an opposite sex side and have a need to express that side of us in varying ways and to varying degrees. I express my feminine side by cross-dressing and I feel very much female when I do so. Other men (while they will probably deny it) exhibit their feminine side



by wearing earrings or growing their hair long or in the occupations they choose (i.e. nursing and teaching traditionally female roles). Women are freer to exhibit their masculine sides through manner of dress and the occupations they choose (that's what the Woman's Lib movement is all about I believe). So much for philosophizing.

I hope you find it suitable to use the enclosed photos. It would give me a real rush to see them in LL. The photo will testify to the fact that I am a neophyte and I obviously need help. Now for the request to your readers. If anyone has tips or advice for me (particularly with makeup), please let me hear from you. I will appreciate all comments and advice. Also I would like to hear from those of you who, if so inclined, want to venture a guess as to my age. (Be honest ladies!).

I hope to be a regular contributor to LL, through letters and photos. Perhaps in the next photos I will even have legs that show and appear a little more feminine. Also, in future letters I might share some of

my experiences with crossdressing.

You may contact me by e-mail at walsencamp@aol.com. Please use the subject heading "LL Response".

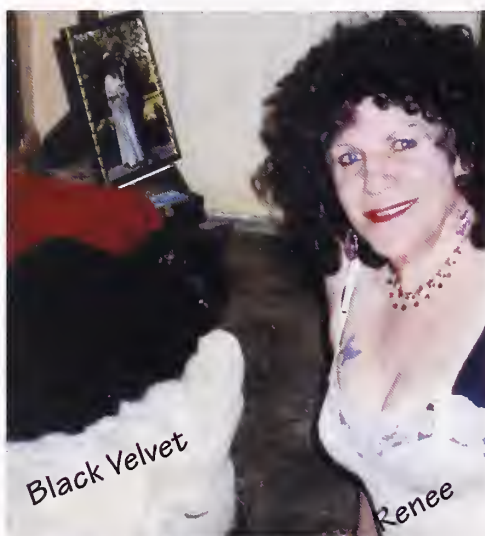
Until next time I remain Femininely yours

Sonja Patrice

It's good to have theories Sonja, but we think there are more reasons that men wear earrings and women work construction than hidden TG tendencies. Generally speaking it's best to stay away from generalities. If you have been dressing since the 1950s you're probably at least in your sixties. I won't hazard a closer guess but I know our readers who like to correspond will take the challenge. Photo tip: Don't pose in front of such a busy background. We want to see you not the background. And, don't send, as I suspect, prints made from digital files. (See the more detailed rant on this in the reply to Amy Joy's letter above.)

Dear JoAnn and Angela,

I want to begin by saying that patience is virtue I'm very short on but I'm trying to get better. I sent that letter about 4 days before I got my #59 issue. As soon as I got it I went directly to the letters portion. I was really feeling bad and I wanted to get that letter back but that was an impossibility. Another lesson learned the hard way. I think there are a lot of people that don't understand the



publishing business. I for one always think that when I sent in pictures or letters that they will make the next issue. I now realize it depends on how soon you get the material before publishing time. I will exercise a lot more patience in the future.

I also loved Angela's article. She really hit the nail on the head. It was really true about our leader President Bush. Now I'm not gay but I feel that the real judge and jury is the one we all answer to at the end of our life. But I guess very few people understand this and want to exercise their views on everyone else. I attend church but I still feel that same sex marriages is between the two involved with each other now. But I realize that everybody wants to look good and are afraid to be honest in their views. Myself, I don't understand that situation but I feel I don't have to like it, I can just accept it. The same goes for the transgendered people, like me, out there.

My brother was gay and he was one of the nicest men when he was alive. My dad didn't understand but he still loved my brother and wasn't ashamed of him. When I read articles about people talking about things they don't understand I get very angry and then I feel I'm lowering myself down to their level. I don't know if I'm making sense but I want you both to keep up the superior work you do in the articles you publish. I just love LadyLike.

I'm enclosing a couple photos that you can publish when you ever can get them in and have room. I thought they might be good for when you get pictures of other gals and their pets. The cat in the photo is Black Velvet, Velvet for short.

I will close by thanking you for all you do for us transgendered gals and thank you for my lesson on patience and tolerance. I gotten to know a lot of other lovely ladies that have written to me who have seen me in your magazine.

Very sincerely,

Renee Miller

503 Keystone St.

Waterloo, Iowa 50703-1523

We know you'll be more patient now that you've read about our complex photo storage system. (See reply to Chris Fox above.) How about it ladies? Would you like to see a TG and Their Pets feature? If so, wash the dog, brush the cat and polish up those iguanas.

Dear LadyLike,

Recently, I spent a week at the Fantasia Fair in Provincetown, Massachusetts. It was both a remarkable and wonderful experience, just great being Liz again—words can't begin to describe my emotions. But, alas, all good things must come to an end. I dreaded the day of departure, morphing back into my male self, once again, shedding Elizabeth's finery and exchanging it for drab male garb. Yuck. Determined to prolong Liz's life to the very last, I dressed one last time, gave Liz a final admiring look in the mirror — I know, vanity, vanity — before heading home on the long and dreary drive. As the miles rolled by and I drew ever closer to home, I could put off the evil moment no longer and, with a heavy heart and a long sigh, pulled off the NY State Thruway at the last service area before my exit. Selecting a parking spot I hoped would be well away from curious eyes I began the awkward process of changing back into male mode in the narrow confines of my car. An hour later, the transformation complete, I scarcely recognized the stranger staring back at me in the mirrors in the

men's room. Is that me? I felt like a stranger in my own skin. Tears came. I felt terrible, convinced I had murdered Liz and stuffed her body in the trunk of my car. I ran my fingers through her pretty things one last time, the lacy slips and silken stockings, before closing the suit-



case. Oh God, I felt awful, and the tears kept flowing copiously. I needed to go back for a cup of coffee to steady my nerves before the final leg of the trip home.

In the days that followed I moped around the house, thoughts of Liz preoccupying me completely. My wife, concerned, said at last: "we need to talk." Eyes misting over, I bared my soul once again and told her how much Elizabeth meant to me and how much she is a part of me. "Would you like to wear a skirt around the house from time to time?" my wife inquired. "Just let me know in advance," she added, "and please, no makeup." I could scarcely believe my good fortune. Was I hearing right? "Yes," I replied, "it will go a long way toward bringing Elizabeth home, and relieve a lot of the tension; I hate having to turn her off and on like a spigot."

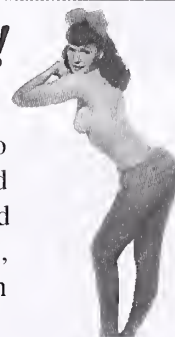
A TG's journey is often a long and painful one, especially if you would like to share it with a spouse. Patience and a loving partner with a sense of humor goes a long way. The other day I was admiring a particularly attractive blouse my wife had on and remarked to her how nice it would look on me. "Well, you can't have it," she replied, chuckling, "go buy your own." I did too. Life has its moments.

Affectionately,
Elizabeth Hulbeck



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Night Moves



Bar d'O - Superb at Ten

by Brianna Austin

Raven-O & Joey Arias were back in NYC, on leave from the *Cirque du Soliel* production **Zumania** in Las Vegas, to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of **Bar d'O**—that comfy neighborhood bar tucked away on the corner of Bedford and Downing Street. The star-studded event drew celebrities such as **Uma Thurman**, **Blaine Trump**, producer **Joel Schumaker**, **Jennifer Ferrin** (*As The World Turns*), an enthusiastic crowd, and presented the city's best and brightest trans-talent.

Len Edwards of *Project Publicity* did a wonderful job promoting, evidenced by the no-standing-room crowd. Sitting on a stool high stage (12 inches square), or standing before it, the performers sang to the crowd—who were on couches along the walls, on the floor in front of them, and standing behind them—making for an intimate in the round, type of vibe.

Raven-O—who would be a sure winner of an Oscar if charisma were a category, emceed the show and was radiant. Even with a “sandy throat,” as she called it, she sounded terrific, and looked great. Las Vegas seems to agree with her. The performers sang solos and duets, joking with the crowd and each other.



Famed NYC queen **Raven-O**.

“And, then the dinosaurs were all wiped out, except for one. They called her *Dragasaurus*,” **Raven** said, as she introduced **Joey Arias**.



Two typical **Bar d'O** audience members.

Kevin Aviance tore off her coat to reveal a multi-colored outfit as she strutted, did runway and vogued for the cameras. **Hedda Lettuce** was a cut-up in a surprise appearance, while **Flotilla Debarge** brought the funk, **Edwige** the cool, **Jimmy James** the style, **Sade** the



The flawless **Miss Angelique Ali**.

and **Porsche** brought the house down with her vocal impersonation of “Piece of My Heart”

power, and **Angelique Ali** the soul. **Uma Thurman** told me outside (speaking of **Angelique**), “she is fantastic.”

Bianca Leigh was our transsexual chanteuse,



Bianca Leigh (in red) and **Lady Bunny** in a candid moment.



An admirer (IL) poses with drag chanteuse **Joey Arias** (center)) and the fabulous **Cashetta**.

(**Janis Joplin**). **Cashetta**, who received **Best Hostess 2003** at the **Glammy Awards**, showed why. She's a new star on the rise, and **The Lady Bunny** was also on hand as



Sade Pendarvis on stage working the crowd.

the special DJ throughout the evening. Actress **Jennifer Ferrin** said, “I enjoyed it all.” The energy was high, the bartenders attentive, and the talent was the bright shining candles on this cake—here's to another 10 years.

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All photos by Brianna Austin

SoBe's So Fine

By Angela Gardner

Well kitties, I just flew in from *South Beach, Florida*. I thought it was getting cold down there when it dropped to the 50s. Home temp on arrival? Twenty seven degrees! Arrgh!

I had a lovely, long January weekend in the heart of *South Beach*, which used to be called *Miami Beach*. Now, in the 21st century it's not even called that anymore. Bowing to the increasing tendency our culture has to shorten names into just initials (I think Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young may have started that) *South Beach* has become **SoBe**. I wandered the streets night and day with my traveling companion, Miss Terry (a lovely GG lady of my acquaintance), and we shopped, ate, danced and drank our way through the area within 10 blocks of our hotel.

Concerned about what to wear in *SoBe* I brought my entire summer wardrobe—and bought some new stuff while there. Everywhere we went, from the delicious and affordable **11th Street Diner** to the expensive boutiques, I was treated like any other lady. We walked through the vendor booths set up on *Ocean Drive* for the **Art Deco Weekend** (the next one is on January 13-15, 2006: <http://www.mdpl.org/weekend.html>) and had coffee at **Starbucks**. I got a few looks (I would have been disappointed if I didn't) but no one got rowdy, there where no cries of "It's a dude, man!" and the one time a guy hit my arm while putting his arm around his girlfriends shoulder may have really been an accident.

Our hotel provided a chance to get on the guest list for some of the local clubs so we got into **Crobar** (www.crobar.com) on Friday night for free. (Most clubs have a weekend cover charge of \$20.) I stopped wondering if the mostly straight crowd would be accepting of a six foot one crossdresser when the drag queen in charge of the velvet rope held it aside and told us to come on in.

Crobar, like the other giant club on Washington Avenue, **The Mansion** (<http://www.theopiumgroup.com>), is built in an old theater. The music on Friday is house, dance, acid house or whatever it is they're calling club music these days. The DJ did a great dance mix of *Santana's Black Magic Woman* that made the original version sound like muzak.

Dancing feet on Friday night gave way to blisters on Saturday so there was no dancing that evening. Saturday and

Miss Adora, a hot drag hostess on the SoBe Scene.



Night Moves

Sunday we dined with Terry's brother who is a resident of Miami and they both agreed that the waiter on Sunday night was enamored with me. Not too badly though 'cause he didn't knock anything off the check.

To sum up, *SoBe* was fun! And warm! Watch out for the humidity though. It was 88% on Friday and 100% during the thunderstorm. It was -27 degrees in the midwest that weekend so who can complain about a little rain?

As in most cities Miami clubs keep their drag nights on weeknights or Sundays. While most clubs, like **Crobar**, welcome TGs anytime, if you are looking for outrageous queens you'll mostly find them on drag nights. Monday nights **Crobar** hosts **Backdoor Bamby**, a mixed crowd fetish night that begs you to come out in your wildest drag—or anything else kinky. Before you go to a club give them a call and see if they are okay with crossdressers. Many of the clubs are devoted to hip hop and rap and the patrons there may not like girls like us. You know how funny people can be.

One thing to remember, clubbing in *SoBe* doesn't get going till 11 p.m. so don't show up at 9 and wonder where everyone is. Below are some of the clubs and the drag parties that I didn't get to attend. If you do attend one of them please let us know how good the party was.



Angela and her new bird buddy on Ocean Drive.



Drag or not drag? Either way this princess is having a great time at the Backdoor Bamby party at Crobar.

Night Moves

Monday Night Drag Show 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Laundry Bar 721 North Lincoln Lane

Lisa Liqueur and the Liquor Sisters perform sloppy, campy drag numbers. **Laundry** is a working laundromat so if your undies need a wash you can have a cocktail while they spin. No cover charge.

Sunday Disco Ball 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Twist 1057 Washington Avenue

Disco Ball in the **Frolic Lounge** with shows hosted by **Ebonee Excell** and **Andreas** at the bar. The drag shows start at 2 a.m. with a long lineup of performers. In the **Bungalow Bar**, the beautiful **Gaiety** dancers work the room from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. No cover charge.

Dragboy 1 a.m.

Twist 1057 Washington Avenue

Adora (<http://www.davidrohn.tv/adora/performances.htm>) hosts this weekly drag show with several guest appearances by the local drags every Wednesday night. No cover charge.

Dining With Adora, Mondays at 9 p.m.

Six2Six

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A prefix menu and **Adora**. Who could ask for more? More info on Adora's website. (See listing above.)

Crobar

<http://www.crobar.com/>

Backdoor Bamby

<http://www.backdoorbamby.com/>

The Monday night fetish party at Crobar.

SoBe Social Club

<http://sobesocialclub.com>

A site with info on the SoBe gay scene.

Diamondz

By Sarah Thomas

You know, some folks say that there's not much for a tranny to do in the greater *Lehigh Valley*. Not so my friends! As you may remember, I shared some info with you about the **Stonewall** in *Allentown* last time.

Well, it doesn't take much to find another "gem" just down the road in *Bethlehem, Pa.* **Diamondz Night Club** is an exciting, welcoming venue where a T-girl can wine, dine,

catch a drag show, or sing Karaoke. The owner, **Lenora**, is a delightful woman who says she welcomes the TG crowd. "We've seen the TG population grow so much. We're even planning a **TG Pageant** scheduled for sometime in **April**," she told me "Girls feel comfortable coming here because we have parking in

back and a private entrance in the rear." ("Hmmm," Sarah thinks, "Entrance in the rear.")

Seriously, I have been to **Diamondz** many times and have always had a great evening. There are drag shows every Friday night and sometimes an occasional show on Saturday. With House DJ **Ridge** spinning hot dance mixes and **Storm**, the lovely **Miss Diamondz** there's always a party atmosphere. They're not shy about doing benefits at **Diamondz**. **Lenora**, the "Queen of Benefits", mentioned that they held events for **FACT**, and **Dream Come True**, among others.

The only negative thing here is that the club can get a little smoky. That's par for the course in Pennsylvania, though. Also, it may be good to call ahead to see if there are any special events taking place. To end with a perfectly fitting cliché **Diamondz** is a girl's best friend... well at least in *Bethlehem, Pa.*

Daimondz Night Club is located at 1913 W Broad Street, Bethlehem, PA. 610-865-1028

www.diamondz.net





Current Queens

by Sarah Thomas

Hopefully, by the time you sit down to read this, spring will be well on its way and the memories of winter snowstorms, tsunamis, and the Bush inauguration will have melted away like so much dirty ice. In fact, the winter here has been so nasty that I was forced to cancel a leg of the Los Nutsacks Northeast Pennsylvania tour thereby leaving fans of our "dragadelic" jams severely depressed. It's true... I heard from both of them.

Before we get started with this issue's interview I must take care of a little house-keeping. I totally forgot to include Cris LeBitch's contact info last time. She's

let me in on some of her projects for the New Year and I'm sure you'll want to get on her email list.

She can be contacted at MissCrisXoXo@aol.com

Certainly a bright spot this past winter was the chance to speak with Edie, one of New York City's top drag performers. Edie is one of those incredibly talented queens who can dance, sing, write songs, choreograph routines, and look fabulous on top of it all.

ST: Edie, thanks for chatting. I understand I caught you

right after a trip to Mexico. Como fue tu viaje?

Edie: That's right. It was great but I returned just in time for a snowstorm.

ST: Were you vacationing or were you down there taking jobs away from all the Mexican Drag Queens?

Edie: In fact, I was performing. I was in Puerto Vallarta. The gay scene is huge in Puerto Vallarta. It's like the San Francisco of Mexico! Gay clubs and cabarets... it's wonderful.

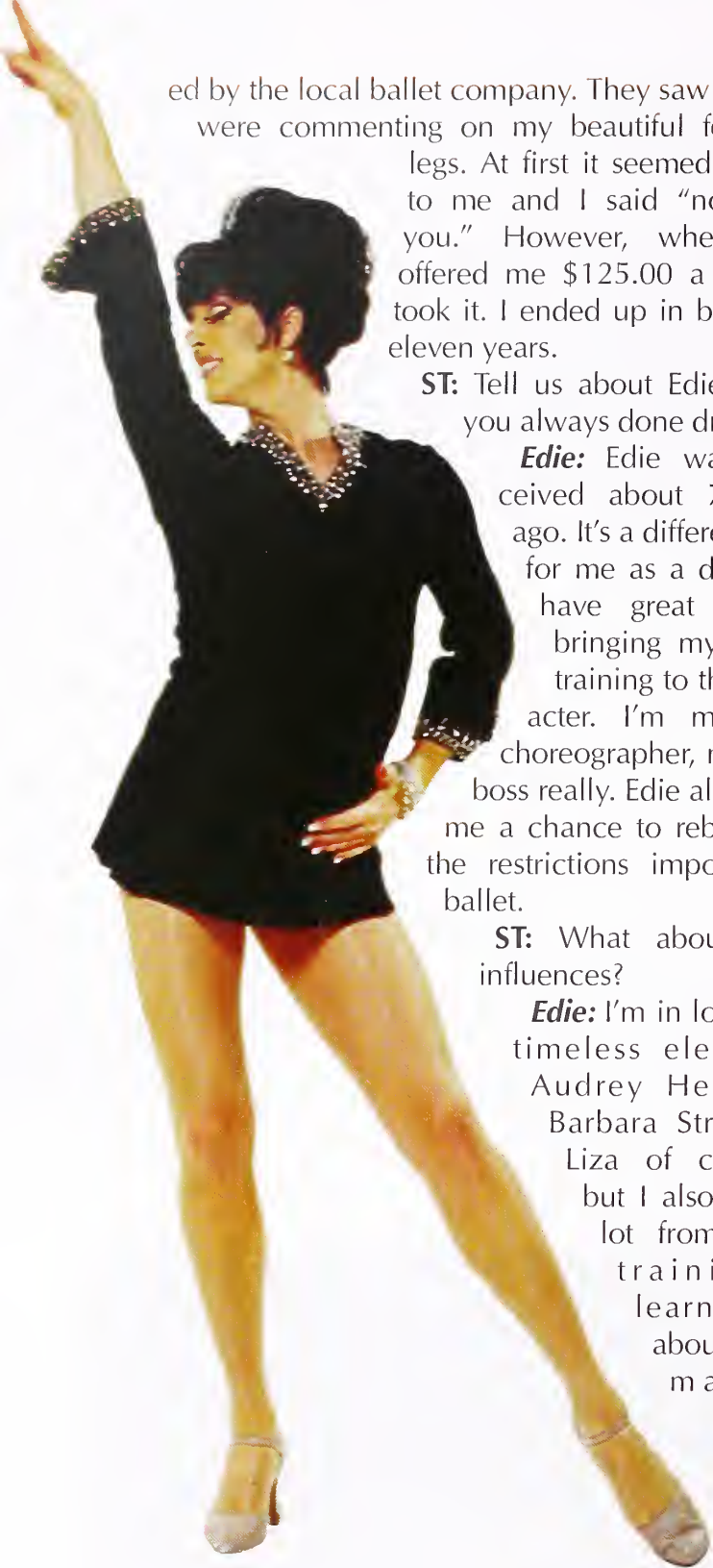
ST: Cool! Kind of a change from NYC.

Edie: Actually, I perform all over. The Cathode Ray Club in Florida, P-town, Fire Island, and Atlanta's All Gay Cruise, to name a few. In February I'll be in Philadelphia at L'Etage. This is exciting because I used to dance with the Pennsylvania Ballet.

ST: Yes, you're classically trained in ballet aren't you?

Edie: That's right. I've been dancing since I was eight years old. My father encouraged us to take dance classes and when I was seventeen I was recruit-





ed by the local ballet company. They saw me and were commenting on my beautiful feet and legs. At first it seemed bizarre to me and I said "no thank you." However, when they offered me \$125.00 a week I took it. I ended up in ballet for eleven years.

ST: Tell us about Edie. Have you always done drag?

Edie: Edie was conceived about 7 years ago. It's a different path for me as a dancer. I have great joy in bringing my dance training to the character. I'm my own choreographer, my own boss really. Edie also gives me a chance to rebel from the restrictions imposed by ballet.

ST: What about your influences?

Edie: I'm in love with timeless elegance. Audrey Hepburn, Barbara Streisand, Liza of course... but I also took a lot from ballet training. I learned a lot about stage make up



ST: Do you mostly perform for gay audiences?

Edie: I'd say about 80% of my work is in gay venues, however in a cabaret space like San Francisco's Plush Room there'll be a mixed crowd.

ST: And you actually sing, you don't lip synch in your shows.

Edie: That's correct. I have great respect for the tradition of lip synching. It's been a part of drag since the beginning. I just choose to sing. It helps, too, because I do original songs. I'm also featured on ABBALICIOUS.

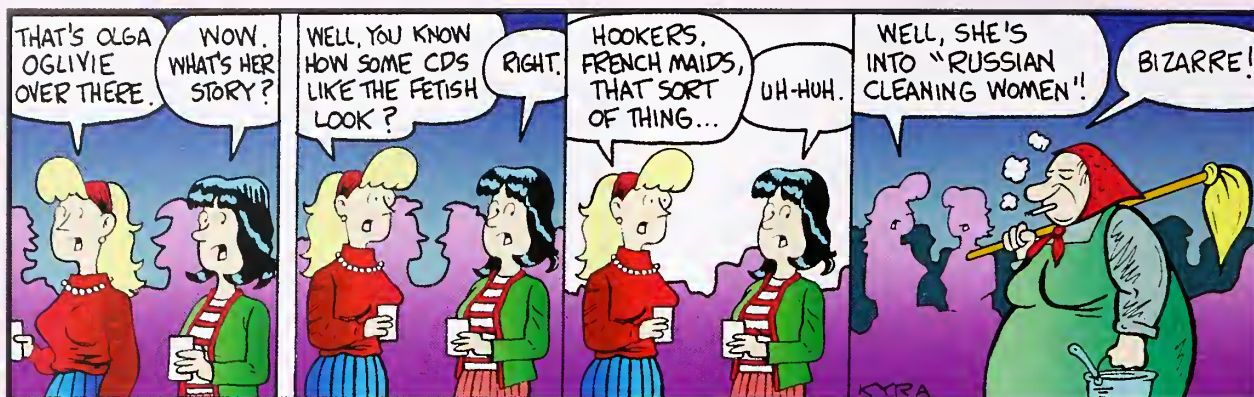
ST: Yes! That's the recording project that brought together a bunch of New York's top names in drag to cover ABBA tunes. Our readers will want to get their copies soon! You've performed everywhere from the MTV Video Music Awards to Wigstock and you are

there. Also, I love vintage clothing. As far as music goes, I do 60's things like "Dancin' in the Streets", "Route 66," some originals. Some of my costumes have a very 60's look, too.

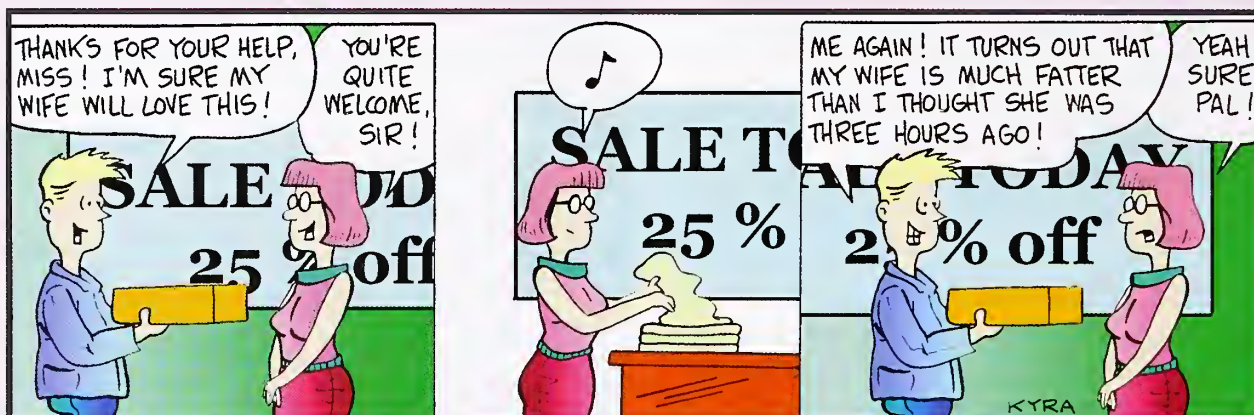
ST: Well you certainly are beautiful. Have you had any cosmetic surgery? Do you live part-time en femme?

Edie: No. It's all illusion. I'm blessed with good bone structure. I only do drag for performance or as part of a public appearance. I'm not a crossdresser.





Lexy Tranner Weekend CD



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TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

By Foxy Roxy, A Lady By Choice

A few Saturdays ago I ventured over to Billy Crew's restaurant and nightclub, for a drink. As I was sitting at the bar, minding my own business, an older gentleman sat next to me. Perhaps it was his hat, but something made him resemble Indiana Jones from Raiders of the Lost Ark—albeit older. He set a brown paper bag with a bottle in it on the bartop and ordered a drink. "Beautiful nails" he said to me, breaking the ice. "Would you scratch my back with them if I scratch yours?" "As if," I thought! He introduced himself as Brian and I told him "My name is Roxy."

He told me that after buying some Scotch at the little liquor store located inside Billy's, he decided to snoop into the bar. He further said that he had been here before—years ago—and that he moved back to town after getting divorced recently. He complimented me on my long lashes and bubbly personality. I smiled, batted my bedroom eyes and thanked him. "So, what's your real name?" he asked. "Roxy", I insisted, thinking he had recognized I was a male dressed up in women's clothes and that he wanted to know my boy name. "No, no, is your real name Roxanne?" he asked. "Yes, it is, but Roxy sounds more youthful," I replied, with a sigh of relief. He continued giving me compliments (which I love) and later asked if I would go home with him. Of course, I declined, but he was persistent. So, to change the subject I asked what sort of work he did for a living. He said he was into commercial real estate and that decades ago he had bought acres of desert land where Billy Crew's now sits, brought in utilities and sold the land for a profit. Intrigued—since I sometimes do cartographic work in this particular area—I asked who does his surveys and topographic plans. With a raised eyebrow, he said he had architects and engineers do that for him - FFH&T. Oh, my gawd! That's the firm I work for! (Gulp!) As he continued talking, I remembered a man at our office a couple of years ago, discussing a project with the head honchos, but I couldn't remember his name.

To test if Brian was actually the man I had seen at our office, I asked if he was aware of our city water conservation program and the origin of the drinking water in our area. I threw in some hi-tech words

which quickly got his attention. "Who are you?" he asked suspiciously. "What do you mean?" I asked defensively, "Everyone reads those words in the newsletter from our utility company," I tried to coverup. "Serves me right," I thought, "I need to learn to play 'dumb blonde' next time."

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people in

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and officials in

Mexico. "Do you

speak Spanish?" I

asked. "How did you present your ideas if you don't

speak the language?"

"Fernando, who owns FFH&T talked to the Mexicans for me. He's a real good friend of mine," Brian explained. Then it clicked—oh my gawd. It was the Brian my boss had introduced to us back at the office! I was beginning to feel a bit uneasy. Try to imagine, a male co-worker hitting on you while you're in drag!

I decided to quickly bail out, before he got the chance to ask what I do for a living and where I work. I looked at my watch and announced I had to leave immediately, claiming I had to meet some friends at another bar. Of course he did everything to try and get me to stay. Nevertheless, I bid Brian goodbye and scampered off to the ladies room to powder my nose. On my way out I ran into Brian again, in the hallway. He reached out for my arm and tried to steal a kiss. With a graceful twist I slipped away from his grasp and quickly made my way to the bar exit, and out to the safety of my vehicle. As I 'fired her' up and buckled my seatbelt, I saw Brian walk out of the bar with his little brown paper bag. As I pulled out of the parking stall I saw him through my rearview mirror, wave at me and with a sly grin, as if to say "I'll be seeing you soon!"



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On My Mind



Several people have asked me what happened to *Girl Talk Magazine*. The short answer is: they went out of business. Why? I don't know. I haven't heard from *Girl Talk* Editor/Publisher Gina Lance since shortly after she tried to make the magazine a web-based publication. My guess at a reason would be they ran out of money. The magazine business is tough on cash flow. I've heard the joke many times: Want to make a million dollars in the (insert your business niche here) business? Start with two million.

I've seen many magazines come and go in our community, *Transgender Community News*, *Cross Talk*, *Chrysalis*, *International TranScript* and I've seen even more **people** come and go. I am especially sad that some of those good people have been (and will be) forgotten. People like Jennifer Richards who pushed so hard to create MAGGIE, the Mid-America Gender Group Information Exchange. Anybody know who Nikki Bee was? How about Lili Elbe? Billie Jean Jones? Diane Marlene Knoetze? Leone Neil? Yvonne Sinclair?

If you can't identify any of those names it's because we, the transgender community, haven't told our own history yet. And we need to before it's lost.

Back in the early 90s, pre-cyberspace, I published a *Who's Who & Resource Guide to the Transgendered Community* annually. The last time that book saw print was 1996. It was a royal pain to keep current. It took a lot of work to collect the information to start with and then it took a lot of work to keep it current. And, just about the time a new edition would hit the street, somebody would drop out, or die, or a business would close, or move, yada, yada, yada.

I used that data to initially populate the Resource Guide database at Transgender Forum where it has been continually updated online. Meanwhile, all the *Who's Who* info has been sitting on my hard drive since 1996 "ageing" as it were.

Last year at the IFGE convention in Philadelphia, several of us were talking about a transgender community history project. This is not a new idea. It's been proposed before, but no one has ever acted on it.

I recently came across the *Who's Who* database and thought to myself, "This is a perfect candidate for posting online". It's going to take some massaging and editing to get it in shape, but it will reside, initially, at the CDS website. Eventually it will move to a new site we're building specifically for *LadyLike* magazine.

When this is posted online, people will be able to make submissions for more information to be added to the database.

Here's a taste of what the *Who's Who* data looks like. Let me know if you think this is a worthwhile project.

Stay Frosty

—JoAnn

Jennifer Richards (deceased), St. Louis, Mo., USA. Primary Affiliation: St. Louis Gender Foundation. Offices Held: President, Vice-president, MAGGIE Representative. Accomplishments: co-producer Dream 1983 (one of the first ever TG events); co-producer Fall Harvest; producer DREAM of a REUNION '94. Awards: The StLGF Barbara Bush Humanitarian Award was renamed the Jennifer Richards Humanitarian Outreach Award in 1996.

Nikki Bee (deceased), Florida USA, Primary Affiliation: Serenity. Offices Held: Founder, leader and newsletter editor. Accomplishments: Founded Serenity based on the Serenity Prayer, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." Nikki was one of the first people to openly write about alcoholism and crossdressing.

Lili Elbe (deceased), Denmark. Accomplishments: First recorded transsexual operation in the 20th century. Born Einar Wegener in the 1880s, she was a Danish painter who died September 1931. Her biography was published as "Man Into Woman" by Neils Hoyer, Jarrolds Publishers, London, England.

Billie Jean Jones, Sacramento, Calif. Accomplishments: Started a semi-infrequent newsletter called "TV-Guise" that evolved into "GenderFlex." Billie Jean was known for her stream-of-consciousness approach to journalism, but she was an excellent writer and a critical thinker. Published poet.

Diane Marlene Knoetze, DeTijger, South Africa. Primary Affiliation: The Phoenix Society. Offices Held: Honorary Life President. Accomplishments: Founder of the Phoenix Society. Newsletter Editor until 1992. Author, "The Transgender Phenomenon."

Leone Neil, New Zealand. Primary Affiliation: The Minorities Trust/TransCare New Zealand. Offices Held: Founding Trustee and Administrator. Accomplishments: Gender activist working for recognition of the rights of transgendered people in New Zealand. Published a wide range of research papers covering gender issues.

Yvonne Sinclair, London UK. Primary Affiliation: Founder, TV/TS Support Group of London. Accomplishments: Organized the TV/TS support group and raised enough money to buy a building for the group. Authored a number of explanatory pamphlets about transgendered behavior.

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